

## **Replacing RACES With An Amateur Radio License Endorsement**

This White Paper describes a proposed concept to abolish the existing Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) regulations and replace them with new regulations, which would establish an *Emergency Management Endorsement* to the amateur radio license. Proposed regulations establishing the National Auxiliary Communications Service require local governments, as a condition of receiving Homeland Security Preparedness Grants to certify that amateur radio operators providing auxiliary communications in their jurisdiction satisfy minimum requirements for:

- 1) Criminal background check
- 2) Annual measurement of continuing participation, and
- 3) Minimum standards for Emergency Communicator Training
  - a. Shall include National Incident Management System (NIMS), and
  - b. Designated FEMA Independent Study courses.

The purpose of the proposed abolishment of all existing RACES regulations and establishment of entirely new requirements is to ensure that amateur radio amateurs receiving the Emergency Management Endorsement meet minimum standards to facilitate national credentialing under the National Incident Management System.

### **Recommended Local Government Process to Pre-Qualify Applicants for the Emergency Management Endorsement**

1) Complete a written application (Appendix A) and local background check form (Appendix B). The purpose is to establish a uniform national registration requirement with the local Office of Emergency Management serving as the vetting authority responsible for certifying radio amateurs as required under these new regulations, which supersede and replace all previous RACES regulations.

2) Upon satisfactory completion of the local background check, applicants are designated TRAINEE - Type IV – and are assigned to either a served agency Group or neighborhood Division unit, as determined by the local authority having jurisdiction, for further indoctrination and training.

3) Emergency Communicator Basic Training shall be customized to meet local Emergency Management needs. However, such training shall meet minimum standards and measure the applicant's understanding and ability to apply the following elements as a minimum:

- a) Use of standard ITU procedural words and phonetics
- b) Use of plain language and common terminology in operations
- c) Demonstrate accuracy, brevity and clarity of communications
- d) Demonstrate proficiency in formal message handling using the ICS Form 213 for voice and data communications
- e) Demonstrate proper procedures for information handling and records management, including the use of NIMS forms for documentation
- f) Understanding of personal preparedness, recommended equipment, personal safety and operational security
- g) Understanding of demobilization procedures and stress management.

A best practice training example may be downloaded at: [www.w4ava.org/training.htm](http://www.w4ava.org/training.htm)

4) Upon completion of the local criminal background check and passing an Emergency Communicator Basic Training examination approved by the local authority having jurisdiction, photo identification cards may be issued at local government discretion and the applicant re-classified as Communicator Type IV Reserve. This is the basic status for enrolled volunteer communications personnel deemed deployable in local operations. This is the first level of Emergency Management Endorsement, which may be appended to an amateur radio license.

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Communicator - Type IV Reserve is defined by the following conditions:

- a) All trained volunteer communicators certified by a local Office of Emergency Management have this minimum level position unless a higher level is indicated on the government issued Identification card.
  - b) Type IV Reserves are routinely called upon to participate in preparedness, mitigation and preparedness exercises of a non-emergency nature.
  - c) Upon a Local Emergency Declaration Type IV Reserves may be activated and assigned to Type IV teams under supervision of a Unit Leader Type IV.
  - d) Type IV Reserves are expected to prepare for local deployment within the home jurisdiction, within 24 hours notice. Typical assignments require portable, mobile or fixed location VHF or UHF, FM voice communications within the city or county where the applicant has enrolled. This basic requirement is intended to be satisfied by using suitable trained personnel possessing the Amateur Radio Technician class license. Typical assignments for Type IV Reserves are portable and mobile voice communications in support of search & rescue, damage assessment, public health, mass care and neighborhood patrol, required by Citizen Corps units, such as CERT, Neighborhood Watch or Medical Reserve Corps.
- 5) Other Proposed Emergency Management Endorsements:

a) Communicator - Type III Ready Reserve is defined by the following:

- 1. Certified by the authority having jurisdiction as Qualified to provide statewide mutual aid. In addition to Type IV requirements a Communicator Type II has demonstrated either proficiency in AX.25 FM or TCP/IP packet (if holding the Amateur Technician license) or HF-SSB, (and optionally at the discretion of the local authority having jurisdiction CW or HF digital modes) if the applicant holds a valid Amateur Radio General or higher class license. At a local government's discretion, the applicant may receive familiarization with use of local government radio, resource and data management systems (such as Xebec user), where authorized. Additional training requirements proposed for the Type III Endorsement are:
  - a) IS-22 Are You Ready – Introduction to Individual Preparedness
  - b) Either IS-5A Introduction to Hazardous Materials; or
  - c) IS-55 Household Hazardous Materials, A Guide for Citizens
  - d) IS-100, Introduction to the Incident Command System
  - e) IS-120, An Orientation to Community Disaster Exercises
  - f) ICS-200 for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents
  - g) IS-700 – Introduction to the National Incident Management System
- 2. Type III Ready Reserves are encouraged to serve as in Unit Leader Type IV positions. Upon one year membership in the unit, with satisfactory performance ratings, and participation as a unit leader for a Type IV team a graded Emergency Management exercise, a Type III ready Reserve re-classified as a Unit Leader Type III, contingent upon completion of additional local government and / or FEMA leadership and management training including at minimum:
  - a) IS-139 Exercise Design
  - b) IS-240 Leadership & Influence
  - c) IS-241 Decision Making & Problem Solving
  - d) IS-242 Effective Communication
  - e) IS-235 Emergency Planning

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- f) IS-800 Introduction to the National Response Plan
  - 3. Type III Ready Reserves are required to maintain training and local incident involvement by participating in 70% of activities of their assigned Division or Group with satisfactory performance ratings.
  - 4. Type III Ready Reserves are Deployment Team members expected to be deployable anywhere within their emergency management operational region or mutual aid response area within 8 hours, preparing to report for the next 12-hour operational period relieving the Type II Active Reserve shift, which has been on duty from the onset of the incident.
- b) Type II - Active Reserve is defined by the following conditions.
- 1. Serve as on Emergency Communications Deployment Team. Type II Active Reserves are considered highly trained individuals in their specialty, and meet or surpass the requirements established by the authority having jurisdiction for this level of participation.
  - 2. Deployment Teams fall into three categories:
    - A Mobile Communications Support Unit: - staff a mobile communications unit, being responsible for understanding all aspects of the communications support vehicle and prepared to deploy within 1-hour notice with the vehicle. Personnel must have a full and complete knowledge of the vehicle, its components and equipment, and be able to handle any communications problems that might arise in the field.
    - B EOC Support Unit - EOC Support Units are responsible for understanding all aspects of the Emergency Operations Center and must be prepared to deploy to the EOC within an hour when activated. They must have a full and complete knowledge of the EOC, all of its components and equipment, and be able to handle any communications problems that might arise at the EOC.
    - C EMAC Communications Unit – A Mutual Aid Communications deployment team consists of three Operators Type III, equipped with mobile and portable VHF-FM digital, mobile and portable VHF and UHF FM voice radios, mobile and portable HF-SSB radio, supervised by a Unit Leader Type II equipped with mobile and portable VHF and UHF FM voice radio and either a portable public safety radio, or other wireless telecommunications approved by the authority having jurisdiction, plus an Operator Type III technical specialist with portable and mobile VHF and UHF voice radio and either public safety portable radio or other wireless telecommunications approved by the authority having jurisdiction, to be on 24-hour call. EMAC Communications Units must be prepared to deploy anywhere statewide and operate independently for 72 hours until arrival of a relief team. EMAC units must have a full and complete knowledge of the National Incident Management System, EOC operations and the NIMS-EOC interface, which occurs between operational units in the field, incident command posts, and area command.
  - 3. Deployment Team members have been certified by the authority having jurisdiction as being qualified to deploy under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact to provide communication support outside their state of primary residence.
  - 4. Type II Active reserves may be appointed as Unit Leader Type II (Division or Group Leaders) either after completion of Management Training and satisfactory performance ratings in three graded exercises or upon demonstrating suitable prior experience, during evaluation and approval of assignment by local the Office of Emergency Management.

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5. Type II Active Reserves are expected to activate and deploy with their teams during the first operational period, immediately upon notification, with a desired response time of 4 hours to any location within their operational area or region. Additional training for the Type II Endorsement in addition to the preceding Type III requirements are:

- a) IS-271 Anticipating Hazardous Weather & Community Risk
- b) IS-275 EOC in Community Preparedness, Response & Recovery
- c) IS-288 Role of Voluntary Agencies in Emergency Management
- d) IS-292 Disaster Basics
- e) IS-301 Radiological Emergency Response
- f) IS-324 Community Hurricane Preparedness
- g) IS-546 Continuity of Operations (COOP) Awareness
- h) IS-547 Introduction to Continuity of Operations (COOP)

6. Type I (Government Employee)

Communications Unit Leader Type 1 is usually a government staffed position, rather than a volunteer, tasked with emergency communications duties. There may be a Federal position description, training requirements and performance standards. A ACS volunteer would likely not fill this position unless the volunteer is already qualified in that position apart from any volunteer status, such as a police, fire or OEM ESF#2 public safety communications lead.

7. FCC Application Process: (see following page)

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### 7. FCC Application Process:

#### Types of Licenses, Permits, and Endorsements

The FCC currently issues the following types of radio operator licenses and endorsements:

- Restricted Radiotelephone Operator's Permit
- Marine Radio Operator's Permit
- General Radiotelephone Operator's License
- GMDSS Radio Operator's License
- Restricted GMDSS Operator's License
- GMDSS Radio Maintainer's License
- Third Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate
- Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate
- First Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate
- Ship Radar Endorsement
- Six Month Service Endorsement

#### Discontinued Licenses and Endorsements

The following types of license and endorsements are no longer issued:

- First Class Radiotelephone Operator License
- Second Class Radiotelephone Operator License
- Third Class Radiotelephone Operator Permit
- Broadcast Endorsement
- Aircraft Radiotelegraph Endorsement (This endorsement will be dropped from any renewed radiotelegraph certificate.)

#### Amateur Radio Emergency Management Endorsement Proposal

Only persons whose amateur radio license bears an endorsement would be eligible to serve as communications volunteers for served agencies.

#### Qualifications

An applicant for the proposed endorsement must:

- a) be at least 18 years old;
- b) be a legal resident of (eligible for employment in) the United States;
- c) hold a Technician, General, Advanced or Amateur Extra class license;
- d) be certified by the state or local government authority having jurisdiction, that the licensee has:
  1. completed the minimum required Emergency Communicator Basic Training, FEMA Independent Study and appropriate experience required for the level of endorsement (Type IV, Type III or Type II); and

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2. Are familiar with the rules, applicable procedures and laws, which govern the state or local government or amateur radio station you will operate on behalf of the authority having jurisdiction.

### **How The Endorsement Would Be Obtained by Licensee**

The local served agency would submit to FEMA a request for EMCOMM License Endorsement(s) that includes a certificate issued by the served agency demonstrating that the applicant has successfully completed the standardized training benchmarks adopted by FEMA.

FEMA would forward approved requests to the FCC, which would issue an updated Amateur Radio license bearing the EMCOMM License Endorsement(s).